

James R. “Bubba” Larson

1943 - 2009

James R. "Bubba" Larson, 65, a life-long resident of Vancouver, Washington died on Sunday, March 15 after a two-year battle with lung cancer.

Bubba served as a Fire Commissioner at Clark County Fire District 6 for 26 years. During his tenure, he spearheaded such programs as the District's Advanced Life Support Paramedic program. In 1981, Fire District 6 was the first district in Clark County with full-time firefighter-paramedics.

He was very active in the Washington Fire Commissioners Association and served as its President in 1981. For many years, he chaired a committee for the WFCA which administered the Association's health insurance program for its member fire districts. The committee collectively saved Washington fire districts millions in insurance premiums through negotiating health-care agreements with providers and using reserves to lessen premiums. In 1999 Bubba led the way for the WFCA health care program to become self-funded. The State Risk Manager considers the Larson-led self-funded program as one of the strongest financially in the state of Washington.

Bubba also served on numerous WFCA committees and was an original member and first chairman of the Governor-appointed Fire Protection Policy Board. Upon his retirement from service as a Commissioner, in January 2003 the WFCA honored Bubba by naming their headquarters building in Olympia after him.

Bubba was widely known in Southwest Washington and Portland for his direction of the annual 4th of July event and fireworks show at Ft. Vancouver. This annual event was one of the favorite things in Bubba's life, which drew upwards of 80,000 people to the Fort grounds and on the river to watch the famous show. At one time the fireworks show was billed as the "largest west of the Mississippi."

Bubba was the owner of Dick Larson Florist in downtown Vancouver for many years. He started an ice-cream store inside his florist business called Bubba Two-Scoops, which was later moved to Hazel Dell.

Bubba touched hundreds of lives during his many community activities in Southwest Washington and around the state. Those he met typically left with a smile, for he was well known for his easy way with all people and his lively sense of humor.

Bubba will be missed by all who knew him, and all are in some way better for having known him. Rest in peace Bubba.

Special thanks to Clark 6 for providing much of the above information.